

To: Senator Formica, Senator Osten, Representative Walker and Members of the Appropriations Committee

From: Candace Bartlett

My name is Candace Bartlett and I am a registered voter in Darien, CT and the Darien Representative to the local component of the Southwest Regional Mental Health Board. I am testifying regarding HB7027, an Act concerning the State Budget. I am particularly concerned about the proposed "consolidation" cut to the Regional Mental Health Boards, which would, in fact, eliminate these entities.

We receive around \$500,000 total to fund 5 regional nonprofits. This is a small amount considering the number of people served by these Boards. The Boards provide independent, external assessment of state-funded programs. We work at the grassroots, community, and regional levels to give feedback on service provision, the impact of program and budget changes, and importantly, emerging needs.

No other organization provides this independent, community-based assessment to improve the behavioral health system needed and utilized by many Connecticut families.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

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